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REVIEW OF NEW PUBLICATIONS:

Epistles on Women, exemplifying their character and condition, in various ages and nations : with miscellaneous poems, by Lucy Aikin. London, printed for J. Johnson and Co. St. Paul's church yard, 1810, p.p. 142, price 12s. English.

THE question respecting the equality of the sexes has been often debated, but a great diversity of opinion still prevails on this subject. Some contend that literary pursuits, by cultivating and improving the mind, renders a female unfit for the occupations of domestic life. A little knowledge may certainly have a dangerous effect, but the more real knowledge we possess the more fully we feel our deficiency, and how much is yet to be learned.

"A little learning is a dangerous thing ;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring :
'There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again."

It is not good policy to wish the female sex to remain in ignorance, as we always find an ignorant person the most untractable. A judicious education and habits of study have a tendency to strengthen the faculties of the mind, and to promote the advancement in the scale of rational existence. Miss Aikin in the preface very justly remarks : "Nothing could, in my opinion, be more foolish than the attempt to engage our sex in a struggle for stations, that they are physically unable properly to fill ; for power of which they must always want the means to possess themselves. No ! instead of aspiring to be inferior men, let us content ourselves with becoming noble women :—let not sex be carried into every thing. Let the impartial voice of history testify for us, that, when permitted, we have been the worthy associates of the best efforts of the best of men ; let the daily observation of mankind bear witness, that no talent, no virtue is masculine alone ; no fault or folly exclusively feminine : that there is no endowment, no propensity, or mental quality of any kind, which may not be derived from her father to the daughter, to the son from his

mother. These positions once established, and carried into their consequences, will do every thing for woman. Perceiving that any shaft aimed at her, must strike in its recoil upon some vulnerable part of common human nature, the Juvenals and Popes of future ages will abstain from making her the butt of scorn or malice. Feeling with gratitude of what her heart and mind are capable, the scholars, the sages, and the patriots of coming days will treat her as a sister and a friend.

"The politic father will not then leave as a "legacy" to his daughters the injunction to conceal their wit, their learning, and even their good sense, in deference to the "*natural malignity*" with which most men regard every woman of a sound understanding and cultivated mind ; nor will ever the reputation of our great Milton himself secure him from the charge of a blasphemous presumption in making his Eve address to Adam, the acknowledgment, "God is thy head, thou mine ;" and in the assertion that the first human pair were formed, "He for God only, she for God in him."

"To mark the effect of various codes, institutions, and states of manners, on the virtue and happiness of man, and the concomitant and proportional elevation or depression of woman in the scale of existence, is the general plan of this work. I make no specific claims for my sex. Convinced that it is rather to the policy, or the generosity, of man, than to his justice that we ought to appeal, I have simply endeavoured to point out, that between the two partners of human life, not only the strongest family likeness, but the most complete identity of interest subsists : so that it is impossible for man to degrade his companion without degrading himself, or to elevate her without receiving a proportional accession of dignity and happiness. This is the chief "*moral of my song* ;" and on this point all my examples are brought to bear. I regard it as

the great truth to the support of which my pen has devoted itself; and whoever shall rise from the perusal of these epistles deeply impressed with its importance, will afford me the success dearest to my heart,—the hope of having served, in some small degree, the best interests of the human race.”

The poem begins by describing a woman, in whose estimation, from want of literary culture, the season of youth forms the most delightful part of life; who never thinks of the durable advantage of a cultivated mind, and who dreads the approach of age which must with her be joyless and dreary.

“Tis the fate of woman:—Man to man Adds praise, and glory lights his mortal span, Creation's lord, he shines from youth to age; The blooming warrior or the bearded sage; But she, frail offspring of an April moon, Poor helpless passenger from love to scorn, While dimpled youth her sprightly cheek adorns Blooms a sweet rose, a rose amid the thorns; A few short hours, with faded charms to earth she sinks, and leaves no vestige of her birth E'en while the youth, in love and rapture warm, Sighs as he hangs upon her beauteous form, Careless and cold he views the beauteous mind, For virtue, bliss, eternity designed.
“Banish my fair, he cries,” those studious looks;
“Oh! what should beauty learn from cabbaged hooks;
“Sweetly to speak and sweetly smile be thine;
“Beware, nor change that dimple to a line!”
Well pleased she hears, vain triumph lights her eyes;
Well pleased, in prattle and in smiles complies;
But eyes, alas! grow dim, and roses fade,
And man condemns the trifle he has made.
The glass reversed by magic power of spleen,
A wrinkled idiot now the fair is seen,
Then with the sex his headlong rage must cope,
And stab with Juvenal or sting with Pope.
Be mine, while Truth with calm and artless grace
Lifts her clear mirror to the female face,
With tender hand the pencil's task to guide,
And win a blush from Man's relenting pride.”

Adam is introduced as a “joyless, hopeless, middlet creature,” until he meets Eve. This event produces a change in both.

“See where the world's new master roams along,
Vainly intelligent and idly strong;
Mark his long, listless step and torpid air,
His brow of densest gloom and fixed infantile stare,
Whose sullen lips no mother's lips have prest,
Nor drawn, sweet labour! at her kindly breast;
No mother's voice has touched that slumbering ear,
Nor glistening eye beguiled him of a tear;
Love nursed not him with sweet endearing wiles,
Nor woman taught the sympathy of smiles;
Vacant and sad his rayless glances roll;
Nor joy nor hope illumines his darkling soul;
Ah! hapless world that such a wretch obeys!
Ah! joyless Adam, though a world he sways.
But see!—they meet!—they gaze, the new born pair.”

Mark now the wakening youth, the wondering fair!
Sure a new world that moping idiot warms,
Dilates his stature, and his mien informs!
A brighter crimson tints his glowing cheek;
His broad eye kindles, and his glances speak.
So roll the clouds from some vast mountain's head,
Melt into mist, and down the valleys spread,
His crags and caves the bursting sunbeams light,
And burn and blaze upon his topmost height,

Broad in full day he lifts his towering crest,
And fire celestial sparkles from his breast.
Eve too, how changed! no more with baby grace
The smile runs dimpling o'er her trackless face,
As painted meads invite her roving glance,
Or birds with liquid thrill her ear entrance;
With down cast look she stands, abashed and meek,
Now pale, now rosy red, her varying cheek;
Now first her fluttering bosom heaves a sigh,
Now first a tear, stands trembling in her eye;
For hark! the youth, as love and nature teach,
Breathes his full bosom, and breaks forth in speech:
His quivering lips the winged accents part,
And pierce, how swift! to Eve's unguarded heart.
Now, rose complete the mighty Maker's plan,
And Eden opened in the heart of man;
Kindled by Hope, by gentle love refined,
Sweet converse cheered him, and a kindred mind;
Nor deemed that He, beneficent and just,
In woman's hand who lodged this sacred trust,
For man alone her conscious soul informed,
For man alone her tenderer bosom warmed!
Denied to her the cup of joy to sip,
But bade her raise it to his greedy lip,
Poor instrument of bliss, and tool of ease,
Born but to serve, existing but to please;—
No,—hand in hand the happy creatures trod,
Alike the children of no partial God.”

A sketch is then given of savage life, and of the oppression and subjection of the female sex by barbarians. In invoking her friend, to whom the poem is addressed, to follow her to view the savage world, Miss Aikin makes some very excellent remarks.

“Fierce on thy view the savage world shall glare,
And all the life of wretched woman there;
Unknown to her long love's romantic glow,
The graceful throbs of sentimental woe,
The play of passions and the feelings' strife
That weave the web of finely-chequered life.
But thou possessest, unspoiled by tyrant art,
Of the large empire of a generous heart,
Thou wilt not scorn plain nature's rudest strain,
Nor homely misery claim thy sighs in vain.
Come then, my friend, my devious way pursue;
Pierce every clime, and search all ages through,
Stretch wide and wider yet thy liberal mind,
And grasp the sisterhood of womankind:
With mingling anger mark, and conscious pride,
The sex by whom exalted or decried;
Crushed by the savage, fettered by the slave,
But served, but honoured, by the good and brave.”

The admiration of sentimentality, and the sarcasms of those who are afraid of the approach to rationality in the female sex, have tended to increase the frivolity so common among the uninstructed. Some may think that females have no higher destination to attain. Triflers may please for a time by the graces of youth, but when age comes they will regret that the time spent in irrational pursuits was not employed in acquiring solid improvement. These triflers, as well as the mere domestic drudges whose views never rise to just ideas of intellectual excellence, are well depicted by this writer.

“O! vapid summary of a slavish lot!
They sew, they spin, they die and are forgot.”

Those who cultivate their minds, and

lay in a store of useful knowledge, will never feel ennui. It is education alone which makes the difference in intellectual capacity between the sexes; if women always had the advantages of a liberal education, and were not afraid to avow their acquirements lest they should be ridiculed by the thoughtless, they would be fully equal to the other sex in every valuable and useful attainment. The difference in the manner of educating the sexes, commences in infancy, and occasions much of the diversity of character, exemplified in their pursuits through life. The boy frequently is forced to apply to his tasks, and to acquire habits of study, while the education of the girl is neglected either through the ignorance or mistaken notions of the parents. Trifling accomplishments are taught, at large boarding-schools, or by a fashionable governess, and the attention of the female is solely turned to seek to please at the expense of neglecting the most important parts of education. Education thus mis-directed has a tendency to make women mere pleasing toys for the passing hour, and music, drawing, and dancing, are made the chief objects of study. With boys they are only secondary objects, but with some women every thing. Hence we may see the difference between the sexes thus instructed. Where women have been well educated, they have shown no inferiority of intellect, and instances of many women breaking through all the obstructions to improvement, and vindicating the dignity of their sex are frequent. In the energetic language of this able vindicator of women.

"Souls have no sex; sublimed by virtue's lore
Alike they scorn the earth, and try to soar;
Buoyant alike on daring wing they rise,
As emulation nerves them for the skies."

A view is taken of Athens, of ancient Rome; of the christian religion, and of its abuse in the rise of superstition and monastic institutions; and of the various modifications thus imposed on the female character; she then continues:

"Still as I gaze what mingled throng appear!
What varying accents rush upon my ear!
Stern, awful, chaste, in savage freedom bred,
Here, German matrons shout o'er Varus dead!
There, languid beauties, 'mid a harem's gloom,
In jealous bickerings pine away their bloom;
Here, well dissembling with a decent pride,
'The victim-widow laves in Ganges' tide,
Clasps the loathed corpse, invites the dreaded flame,
And dies in anguish, not to live with shame."

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I turn, and meet the animated glance
Shot by the dames of gay seductive France;
Then melting, catch the gaze, so fond, so mild,
Some English mother bends upon her child.
A thought, a look, a line, the meanest ask,
To swell my growing tale, and lengthen out my task."

A survey is taken of the Turkish haram, the imbecile character of the women, and the haughty, yet contemptible manners of the men; she justly remarks,

"Man, stamp the moral on thy haughty mind,
Degrade the sex, and thou degrades the kind."

In speaking of ancient Germany, she finely contrasts the manners of those countries where the women are considered as mere slaves, and the Germans who generously treat their wives and daughters as their companions and friends:

"Mark the bold contrast! hail, my friend, with
'The generous son of German liberty' [me,
Barbarian! yes: 'To spread the winged sail
Of venturous Commerce to the speeding gale,
'To urge his ploughshare o'er the conquered soil,
And earn from culture's hand the meed of toil,
As yet he knew not, burst amid alarms,
His care was freedom, his rude trade was arms:
But this he knew, to woman's feeling heart
Its best, its dearest tribute to impart;
Not the cheap falsehoods of a flatterer's strain,
Nor idle gauds, vain incense to the vain;
But such high fellowship, such honoured life
As throws a glory round the exulting wife,
Beats her revered, sublime, on Virtue's throne,
Judge of his honour, guardian of her own.
Dear was to him the birth-right of the free;
More welcome death than her captivity!
And hence his valour's rude but vigorous stroke
Stunned Rome, and snapped her vainly fitted yoke."

Chivalry is personified; his courage, his devotion to the ladies, his romantic love, "Love's gallant martyr, honour's generous child," the lady is described as endowed with all virtues and graces, but found to be an imaginary being.

"But say, this paragon, this matchless fair,
Trod she this care-crazed earth? No—born of air;
A fitting dream, a rainbow of the mind,—
The tempting glory leaves my grasp behind,
Formed for no rugged chime, no barbarous age,
She blooms in fairy land the grace of Spencer's page."

Gallantry, the parasite and destroyer of the female sex, is then characterized:

"New to the discipline of good and ill,
Unformed of manneis, impotent of will,
What thirst of empire seized the giddy train!
Man bowed obsequious, and deferred the rein;
(So Maids on Venus smiled in courts above,
So crouched in all the loyalty of love.)
Ah! feigned humility to scorn allied,
'That stoops to conquer, flatters to decide!
Learn, thoughtless woman, learn his arts to scan,
And dread that fearful portecut—*Kneeling man*
Dread the gay form whom now, her favourite birth,
Some smiling mischief thrusts upon the earth
Veiled in a scented cloud;—t' melt, and see
Come dancing forth the phantom Gallantry.
His are the lowly bow, the adoring air,
'The attentive eye that dwells upon the fair,
His the soft tone to grace a tender tale,
And his the flattering sighs that more prevail;
His the whole art of love;—but all is art,
For kindly Nature never warmed his heart;
No hardy knight with wrong reasoning brand
S

He roams on Honour's pilgrimage the land;
No awful champion vowed to Virtue's aid;
He flings his buckler o'er the trembling maid;
No high enthusiast to his peevish love
He plights pure vows, and registered above,
Canker of innocence! he lives at ease,
His only care his wanton self to please.
Hymen's dear tie, for him a sordid league
Kint by ambition, av'rice, or intrigue,
He scorns, he tramples, and insulting bears
To other shrines his incense, and his prayers,
There, skilled in perfdy, he hangs to view
A hundred foppish passion never knew—
Lives that live by telegraph convey,
Loves traced in blood, and quamt autistic lay—
Poor trifles all,—but trifles poor as these
Cheat the cold heart, the vagrant fancy seize,
From sober love, from faithful duty wane,
And sell to fear and sin the fancied Queen."

The attention is then turned to Switzerland, which is described as still virtuous though oppressed by France; and the important maxim is inculcated that without pure morals there can be no true public spirit, or patriotism, in the proper sense of the word.

"Pure was the heart of Switzerland, when Tell
Aimed the avenging shaft, and cried 'Rebel!'
Pure was the self-devoted blood that dyed
The mangled breast of her bold Winkelreid;
Pure were the mountain-homes whence foaming out
The patriot-torrent rushed, and gave the rout,
Where rose the pile of bones to tell mankind
"This monument the spoiler left behind."
Nor virtue yet had fled her rock-built bower
When Gaul's intruding demon drunk with power,
Burst on that paradise appalled he found
A Spartan fortitude embattled round.
Rapt by a fine despair, the mad, the wife,
Charged by their heroes' side and fired the strife—
The strife victorious,—but oppressed, betrayed,
Fell the brave patriot few, no friend to aid.
Then spotless victims of a doom severe,
They died upon their murdered country's bier.
Deu not in vain,—to stamp on that proud name
The weight of vengeance and the curse of shame.
Plant thy bright eagles o'er each prostrate realm,
Audacious France! and headlong from his helm
Each dazing steersman dash,—but hope not thou,
Amid the plundered baubles of thy brow,
To twine a wreath from Freedom's sacred tree;
It blooms with Virtue, but it dies with thee."

In mentioning the French Revolution, Miss Atkin pays a just tribute to Madame Roland, whose excellent understanding directed to noble purposes, rendered her an ornament to the female sex. After this long flight through distant kingdoms, we are brought back to England.

"To hearth's domestic and the sheltering bower,"
where

"Our timorous mothers, from invading strife,
Wrapt in a meek monotony of life,
Humbly content to pace with dutious round,—
Their little world, the dear domestic ground
Wars of protecting man, nor dared to claim,
Nor dared to wish, the dangerous meed of fame,
Till, snatched in triumph from his ancient tomb,
The lamp of learning blazed upon the gloom,
And wide around to kindling hope revealed
The bloodless contest of a nobler held,
And courteous Wisdom to the bashful throng
Waved his pure hand, and beckoned them along."

We now arrive at the period when female education was a little attended

to, and a deserved compliment is paid to Sir Thomas More for his care in instructing his daughters. His daughter Margaret wrote with elegance, both in English and Latin; in the latter language her style was so pure that many could scarcely believe her compositions were the work of a female. A tribute is paid to the memory of Lady Jane Grey, Lady Russell, and Mrs. Hutchinson, the widow and historian of her patriotic and amiable husband, Colonel Hutchinson; she is thus elegantly apostrophized.

"But thou pure partner of man's noble cause,
Take generous Hutchinson, this heart's applause;
'I was thine to stem a foul and angry tide,
A high soul'd helpmate at the patriot's side;
Then cast sad relict! on an angry shore,
All wreckt, all lost, the gallant struggle o'er,
Yet, greatly constant to a husband's trust,
True to the joyful memory of the just,
Chide back thy tears, uplift thy mourning head,
And hve the high historian of the dead,
Knock at thy children's breasts, and cry with pride,
Thus lived our patriot, thus our martyr-died!"

Queen Elizabeth is described in rather too flattering terms. She was a great Queen, but she was not an amiable character. The greatness of her mind on many occasions, could not exempt her from the despicable rivalry of beauty and the desire of admiration, which she suffered to display themselves on many occasions, particularly in her conduct towards Mary Queen of Scots. She was insincere, and vain of her literary talents; yet there are many allowances to be made for her when we consider that she was perpetually assailed by servile homage on the throne, and it requires more than common strength of mind to remain uninjured by the combination of flattery and power. The truth, especially disagreeable truth, could seldom reach her ears. She had, however, great talents for governing, she possessed courage and activity, and she patronized men of talents, she

"Flashed on Spencer's dazzling sight
Long meteor-streams and trails of fancy light,
Twinkled on Shakspeare's lowly lot, and shed
A smile of love on Bacon's boyish head."

Englishmen are exhorted in the following energetic manner to promote the mental improvement of females, and to treat them as friends, not as inferiors.

"Sons of fair Albion, tender, brave, sincere,
(Be this the strain an earnest suppliant hear!
Fec! that when Heaven, evolved its perfect plan,
Crowned with its last, best gifts transported man,
It formed no creature of ignoble strain,
Of heart unteachable, obtuse of brain;
(Such had no bled the solitary void,

Nor such his soul's new sympathies employed)
 But one all eloquent of eye, of mien!
 Intensely human; exquisitely keen
 To feel, to know: Be generous then, unbind
 Your barbarous shackles, loost the female mind;
 Aid its new sights; instruct its wavering wing,
 And guide its thirst to Wisdom's purest spring:
 Sincere as generous, with fraternal heart
 Spurn the dark satirist's unmanly part;
 Scorn too the flatterer's, in the medium wise,
 Nor feed those follies that yourselves despise.
 For you, bright daughters of a land renowned,
 By genius blest, by glorious Freedom crowned;
 Safe in a polish'd privacy, content
 To grace, not shame, the lot that nature lent,
 Be yours the joys of home, affection's charms,
 And infants clinging with caressing arms:
 Yours too the boon, of Taste's whole garden free,
 To pluck at will her bright Hesperian tree,
 Uncheck'd the wreath of each fair muse assume,
 And fill your lap with amaranthine bloom.
 Press eager on; of this great art possess,
 To seize the good, to follow still the best;
 Pity the pale lamp, explore the breathing page,
 And catch the soul of each immortal age.
 Strikes the pure bard his old romantic lyre?
 Let high Belphebe war, let Amoret sweet inspire.
 Does History speak? drink in her loftiest tone,
 And be Cornelia's virtues all your own.
 Thus self-endowed, thus armed for every state,
 Improve, excel, surmount, subdue your fate!
 So shall at length enlightened man efface
 That slavish stigma sear'd on half the race,
 His rude forefathers' shame; and pleased confess,
 'Tis yours to elevate, 'tis yours to bless;
 Your interest one with mine; your hopes the same; }
 Fair peace in life, in death undying fame,
 And bliss in worlds beyond the species' general aim.
 "Rise," shall he cry, "O Woman, rise! be free!
 My life's associate, now partake with me:
 Rouse thy keen energies, expand thy soul,
 And see, and feel, and comprehend the whole;
 My deepest thoughts, intelligent, divide;
 When right confirm me, and when erring guide;
 Soon all my cares, in all my virtues blend,
 And be my sister, be at length my friend."

The poems are dedicated to her sister-

in law Mrs. Charles Rochemont Aikin, daughter of the late Gilbert Wakefield, that undaunted martyr in the cause of liberty, whose care in the education of his daughter is thus elegantly and feelingly described, in the concluding lines of the poem.

"Anna, farewell! O spirit richly fraught
 With all that feeds the noble growth of thought!
 (For not the Roman, nor the attic store,
 Nor poet's song, nor reverend sages' lore,
 To thee a Wakefield's liberal love denied,
 His child and friend, his pupil and his pride,) Whose life of female loveliness shall teach
 The finish'd charm that precept fails to reach;—
 Born to delight, instructed to excel,
 My judge, my sister, take this heart's farewell!"

We highly recommend this book to the perusal of our readers, confident that they cannot read it without having a more exalted idea of the female sex, and on this account we have made long extracts of the miscellaneous poems, which compose the remainder of the volume; "the Ode to Cambria," excels in fine painting, and the lines "to the memory of the late Rev. Gilbert Wakefield," in true sensibility and feeling. The whole of the poems have the characteristic of genuine poetry, "Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn," and are unlike those ephemeral poems which leave little impression on the memory after the book is closed.

FOREIGN LITERATURE.

Extract of a Letter from Dr. Lewis Frank, First Physician to the Bashaw of Jannina, to a gentleman at Paris.*

Jannina, May 15th, 1806.

THE interest you have always felt in every thing that concerns me, leads me to presume, that you will be

* Dr. Frank was in Egypt, practising as a physician, when the French invaded that country. He then entered into the French service, and returned to France with the last division of the French troops. During his stay at Paris, he published in the *Moniteur* several interesting pieces respecting Egypt, and wrote a short pamphlet on the trade of the Negroes to Cairo. After having had the superintendence of several hospitals in

glad to hear some news of me, as well as of the country where I live. A chain of circumstances, which it is unnecessary to particularize, prevented my writing sooner. Though I cannot say I find every thing as I could wish in this country, I have every reason to be satisfied with the bashaw. He is a man of considerable talents, and of unparalleled affability. He has a particular predilection for the French nation; and no man so highly values the great qualities of the hero by whom the

what was formerly Piedmont, he went to Jannina, under the character of first physician to the Bashaw, on the recommendation of his relation, the celebrated Dr. Frank, then of Vienna, but now of Wilna, whose pupil he had been.